

**Delight Yourself in the Lord** (taught in February 2019)

**Psalm 37:4-6** Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and he will do this. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like a noonday sun.

**Week 1 (of 2)**

*I focus today on the concept of context. Adapt it as needed for younger children. They'll still get something out of it. For your older kids, they should learn quite a bit. Even though we're not discussing the meaning of this week's memory verses, this concept of context is really important. Next week we'll talk specifically about the verses.*

*Optional discussion questions/conversation starters:*

- What is a psalm? (Psalms are mostly songs or poems.)
- Old Testament or New Testament? Who wrote this psalm? (David) Who is David? (King of Israel, 1000 BC)
- Verse 4 is a verse that many Christians have memorized, yet many do not understand what it means, and many think it means something that it doesn't. Let me show you:
- What are some of the "desires of your heart"? Meaning, what are some things you really want?
- Reread verse 4: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." What does this verse sound like it means?

To me, it sounds like if I "delight myself in the Lord," that God will give me things that I want. I like the sound of that! But does this sound consistent with what the rest of the Bible says? I don't think so.

- So many Bible verses are worth memorizing. Memorizing verses helps keep the truth of God's word in our minds and hearts, and it makes it easy to share encouraging or instructive Bible verses when talking with people (rather than having to search for a verse you want to share that you just can't remember). And since the Word of God is the "sword of the spirit" (Eph 6:17), it's better to share the actual words God spoke rather than talk *about* the words God spoke.
- At the same time, it is important that we learn what the verses *mean* in addition to memorizing them. In order to know what verses mean, we need to read the words before and after the verses we've memorized. This is called *context*. We want to read everything before and after the verses *that pertain to the verses*. For instance, if we memorize something Jesus spoke, we should read what comes before and after the verses we're memorizing so we know the whole story. Words can mean very different things when read in different contexts. If we don't do this, we may think the verses mean something that they don't.
- Reread verse 4. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." When reading this verse all by itself, I still think it's telling me that if I "delight myself in the Lord," that God will give me what I want.
- Now, read verses 1-9. Do you see what is actually being talked about in this psalm? David is contrasting two things: those who do evil and those who follow the ways of the Lord. If you didn't see it, read verses 1-9 again and you will now notice it, and if you read the entire psalm, you will see it again and again and again.
- Reread verse 1: "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong." Why would we be envious of those that do wrong? Because sometimes people get rewarded for doing bad things. Read the second part of verse 7: "do not fret when men succeed in their ways". We can be tempted to be envious of people who do wrong when they succeed. Can you think of an example? (Perhaps someone cheats on a test and gets an award for getting the highest score on the test.) God knows it may be hard for us when

we see good things happen to people who do bad things. He wants to help us, so he tells us the truth in the following verses!

- In verse 1, God says, “Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong,” and then quickly jumps to verse 3: “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and he will do this. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like a noonday sun.” David then continues to go back and forth and back and forth contrasting those who do evil and those who do good. *This psalm, including our memory verses this week are telling us what to do, and how if we do them, that we will be blessed.* It is not telling us that God will give me anything I want. (bummer! 😞)
- Do you see how reading the verses before and after the verses we memorize help us understand what the verses actually mean? What is this called again? (context) The context for today can be this psalm: Psalm 37. Reading verses 1-9 provided the context for the song’s verses; the remainder of the psalm reinforces the contrast again and again. (If you have time, read it all! It repeatedly states how, even though the evil may appear to succeed for a season, the wicked will fall and those who follow the Lord will be rewarded. It’s worth the read!)
- Now that we’ve read our verses in context, we can talk about the verses specifically – next week! 😊
- Ask each person to share something for which they would like prayed. Close in prayer (can be led by one person or each person can pray), specifically including everyone’s prayer requests, and asking God to help us read the Bible in a way that we can know what the words actually mean!
- Finish by singing the song again!

*Optional activity during the week:* [Focus Point vs. Context](#) (and 20 Questions!)

by Dana Twichell

**Previous Weeks' Lessons:**

[August 23, 2020 – Life and Breath Part 2](#)

[August 16, 2020 – Life and Breath Part 1](#)

[August 9, 2020 – Faith Part 2](#)

[August 2, 2020 – Faith Part 1](#)

[July 26, 2020 – Call to Me Part 2](#)

[July 19, 2020 – Call to Me Part 1](#)

[July 12, 2020 – In My Father's House](#)

[July 5, 2020 - Go](#)

[June 28, 2020 – Do What It Says](#)

[June 21, 2020 – Servant of All](#)

[June 14, 2020 - Trust](#)

[May 31, 2020 - Young](#)

[May 24, 2020 – Word of God](#)

[May 17, 2020 – More Than Conquerors](#)

[May 10, 2020 – The Light of the World](#)

[May 3, 2020 – The Good Song](#)

[April 26, 2020 – The Word of the Lord](#)

[April 19, 2020 – Never Be Shaken](#)

[April 12, 2020 – Jesus Christ is Lord](#)

[April 5, 2020 – Out of the Mud](#)

[March 29, 2020 - Treasure](#)

[March 22, 2020 – Do Not Be Anxious](#)